

Spellbinder

By J. P. LOUGHNAN

Mr. Casimir Kentyn led a clergyman into the lift at Bullion House and bade John Bevis, the liftman, a cheery good morning.

John had faith in Kentyn. His handsome suite of offices occupied the whole of the third floor, and evidently he made lots of money. "If a gent can do that for himself, he can do the same for other people," argued the liftman.

It was an important point because John's future mother-in-law had just received a legacy of £50 under a brother's will. Mrs. Dale lived with her daughter, Tilly, at Westminster; they both regarded John as a financial authority and he liked to encourage the idea by repeating chance remarks overheard in the lift.

Their discussion about the legacy took place one evening after work in the Dales' little parlor. Tilly's mother, a timid, nervous woman, started the subject.

"What should I do with the money?" she asked John.

The representative of Bullion House answered confidently:

"You can't do better than come to our Mr. Casimir Kentyn. He's a bloke who makes money for people easy as falling off a log; he's a very pleasant gentleman, too. There's just one thing to remember, tho', I think you oughter see him as a stranger."

"Why?" demanded Tilly.

John gave a modest shrug.

"Well, a liftman's only a liftman, so it's not going to do your mother any good to mention me."

"Very well, you know best," submitted Mrs. Dale. "Can I call with the money tomorrow?"

"Yes, come at three o'clock. He's back from lunch by then and always in a rare good mood. Don't forget I shall pretend not to know you," concluded John, with a chuckle.

The little plot developed nicely. Soon after half-past two next day, Mr. Kentyn returned from lunch, beaming behind a big cigar; punctually at three Mrs. Dale made her appearance. Keeping a very straight face, John politely touched his cap, whisked her to the third floor, indicated Kentyn's inquiry office, showed her how to ring the lift bell when she was ready to come down.

But when, half an hour later, Mrs. Dale reappeared with a large envelope under one arm, John's curiosity proved too much for him. Stopping the lift between floors, he exclaimed in an eager whisper:

"Everything all right, dear?"

Mrs. Dale nodded happily.

"The gentleman happened to have just what I wanted. Bearer bonds they are called, with coupons attached. You cut off the coupons and cash them like a cheque, but you can only do it on certain days."

"Sounds a bit of all right," grinned John.

Mrs. Dale held out the envelope. "I want to go shopping. Will you keep this for me and bring it round this evening? Have a look at the bonds if you like."

John buttoned them inside his tunic and finished the journey. Later, over a cup of tea in the basement he opened the envelope.

It contained five important-looking green documents, headed with the arms of the Sandolfo Republic and covered with copperplate printing. Each bond opened like a small newspaper, its second page being entirely composed of coupons. These bore the dates on which they would become payable and the amount of interest due.

John examined them carefully, rubbed his eyes and looked again.

"Odd," he muttered, "I don't understand this." The problem was still puzzling him when the lift bell sounded. A stockbroker's clerk named Dick Ransom wanted to go up to his office on the second floor. Here was a chance of getting information, John said:

"Please, sir, can you tell me anything about the bonds of the Sandolfo Republic?"

Young Ransom nodded. "Don't touch 'em, Bevis. The Sandolfo Government has defaulted, which means you get no interest on their bonds."

Suddenly John felt his mouth go dry.

"What are five bonds worth, sir?" he faltered.

"You might get five pounds."

"Suppose a gentleman wanted to sell five for fifty pounds?"

"A gentleman wouldn't," retorted Ransom. "A spellbinder might."

"What's a spellbinder, sir?"

"A man who can make you believe anything, a dud financier, like—"

Young Ransom pulled himself up.

"Can dud financiers be prosecuted?" persisted John.

"Yes, if you like to throw good

money after bad. But take my tip and leave Sandolfos alone."

John returned to the basement with an empty feeling under his waistcoat. What would Tilly say? Probably she'd throw his over.

Again he examined the bonds; the next interest payment would fall due in three months.

The rest of the day was like a nightmare to John. After trying to eat something, he set out miserably for Westminster.

"You're right about Mr. Kentyn. He's a real gentleman and ever so nice," chirruped Mrs. Dale. "He let me have those bonds as a special favor."

John felt the perspiration trickling down his back while Tilly bent her sleek black head over the bonds. Soon he saw her finger shoot out accusingly.

"But, darling, here's a coupon dated nine months ago."

John gave a hoarse cough, tried to steady his thumping heart. Before he could speak, Mrs. Dale was answering quietly:

"Yes, Tilly. You see, Mr. Kentyn is a very busy man and he forgot to cash those coupons last December. Now they've got to be kept till the next lot fall due. He wants me to accept the extra interest as a gift from him."

Tilly clapped her hands.

"I reckon Jack was about right when he put you on to Mr. Kentyn," she laughed.

"You shall have the first interest as a wedding present," declared Mrs. Dale. "Take a cup of tea, John—you look fagged out. I don't believe lift work's healthy; you'll be ever so much better when you've got a business of your own."

"Yes, I hope so," John heard himself agree.

The financier arrived at Bullion House alone next morning. John had hoped for this. He stopped the lift between floors.

"Mr. Kentyn, sir," he said, "yesterday you charged a friend of mine £50 for five Sandolfo bonds. A stockbroker tells me they're not worth more than five pounds."

To John's amazement Casimir merely smiled.

"My dear Bevis," he purred, "what do stockbrokers know about these things?"

"Well—I mean— isn't it their job to—er—know?"

Kentyn shook his big head.

"No, Bevis, stockbrokers are fools. Never go to a stockbroker, my lad; if your friend wants to sell her bonds, I'll find a buyer."

"But will you get as much as she gave for them, Mr. Kentyn?"

"Of course I will—probably more. Give me a fortnight, Bevis and I'll find a buyer."

But the fortnight passed, and Kentyn put him off with a plausible excuse. There were always excuses and the date of the next coupon payment was approaching. With only four weeks left John began to give up hope. Then, one morning, Casimir exclaimed, with his jolly smile:

"Look here, Bevis, I'll buy those bonds for myself if you like, and I'll pay sixty pounds for them. That will give Mrs. Dale a tenner profit. What do you say?"

John answered with a delighted "Yes." Kentyn continued briskly:

"I'll send a note by special messenger, asking Mrs. Dale to bring the bonds round at once."

"I'm afraid she won't come till this afternoon, sir; she does her ironing this morning."

"Then we'll say four o'clock, Bevis."

Soon after midday two very solemn gentlemen came to the lift and inquired for Mr. Kentyn. In a quarter of an hour they came back, and Casimir came with them.

"If I can't get back this afternoon, Bevis, I shall be here in the morning," said Kentyn.

"Very good, sir," mumbled John, trying to hide his bitter disappointment.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when young Ransom rushed into the lift, brandishing an evening paper.

"They've got him at last!" he cried. "The old spellbinder!"

John jumped.

"Who's that, sir?" he quavered.

"Why, Casimir Kentyn, of course," laughed Ransom. "The old scoundrel's been arrested for fraud—"

Hallo, what's the matter, Bevis? Surely he didn't swindle you?"

John answered shakily.

"No, sir. But he sold my girl's mother five Sandolfo bonds for fifty quid. Then he promised to buy them back for sixty pounds this afternoon. Swank, I reckon. He must have known the tecs were coming."

"You're wrong there," contradicted Ransom. "He'd have bought the bonds right enough and done you

properly. A new president has just come into power at Sandolfo and he has promised to resume interest payments. Sandolfo bonds are booming. I can get you eighty quid for five."

Before John had quite recovered his breath, somebody tapped him on the shoulder. He looked round and saw Tilly with a square envelope under her arm.

"Here are mother's bonds," she said. "We got a note from Mr. Kentyn this morning. He says you advise us to sell them for £60."

John answered with a knowing look.

"I've found a better buyer since then. Mr. Ransom here can get you £80. He's a stockbroker."

Tilly flashed a smile at Ransom.

"Jack's my boy," she exclaimed. "Mum and I always take his advice about money."

Ransom replied, without looking at John: "I think you're very lucky."—London "Answers."

USE OF WOOD IN BUILDING

Many Tests Made To Determine Strength Of Different Grades

Toonto. — The use of lumber as a material of construction ante-dates written history. For centuries rule of thumb and practical experience were the only guides to sound practice and the erection of safe structures. No longer ago than the last century, loads were relatively small, and lumber was comparatively cheap and easily procured.

However, with the introduction of heavier machinery, heavier rolling stock on the railways, and heavier loads in industrial buildings and warehouses, the matter of establishing safe allowable stresses for use in design because of paramount importance. That one species of lumber was stronger than another for certain purposes was well known. But how much stronger? Only a series of comprehensive mechanical tests, carried out according to standard methods, could supply the necessary information and enable accurate comparison to be made between different local species or competitive species on the export market.

The Douglas fir and Western hemlock forests of British Columbia constitute the most important source in the British Empire of large structural timbers. In the world markets, the most serious competitor of Douglas fir in large sizes is Southern yellow pine, from the southeastern portion of the United States, which has been established as a structural species for a much greater length of time than Douglas fir. As the direct result of laboratory tests, these two species are given an equal strength rating for construction purposes.

Recently, at the Vancouver laboratory of the Forest Products Laboratories of Canada, Forest Service, Department of the Interior, tests were made of the strength in bending of Douglas fir timbers. Wide divergence of allowable stresses for Douglas fir and Western hemlock are noticeable in different city building codes. Such differences will ultimately be eliminated as the result of such tests.

The increasing number of inquiries concerning the strength of Canadian timbers which come to the Forest Products Laboratories from lumber associations, engineers, architect and others, both in Canada and abroad, indicate a steadily growing appreciation of the use of timber in structures and of the desirability of careful selection of such timber to produce maximum service.

England and Wales Show Increase in Birth Rate

London.—England and Wales in 1934 showed the first definite increase in the birth rate since 1920, the Registrar General announced recently.

The 1934 rate was 14.8 per 1,000 of population. The low rate was 14.4 in 1932.

"I should like to have the histories rewritten so as to emphasize the cost and horror of war, not merely its heroics."—Bruce Barton.

"Truth knows no national boundaries."—Sherwood Eddy.

Selfishness Is Natural To Very Young Children

It's Not An Acquired Trait As Parents So Often Think—We're All Born With It

We all have a habit of thinking that selfishness is an acquired trait, but the sooner we realize that it is a natural one, the better equipped we are to face its problems.

The self complex was put there to keep man alive, happy according to his lights and rights and extended to those belonging to him.

A little child is not any more selfish in wanting his way than are his mother and father in wanting theirs. Little Mary is not any more demanding when she refuses to lend her doll than her mother is in refusing to lend Mary herself to a neighbor, and tiny Thomas is not any more selfish when he insists on playing horse when the rest of the tots want to dig than his Daddy is when he refuses to play bridge in order to have a game of poker.

SELFISHNESS POSITIVE TRAIT

Selfishness is considered the negative and generosity the positive trait too often. It is the other way about, actually, as human temperament, goes. Selfishness is the positive current and generosity is opposed to it. This is why generosity is so hard to graft into the little character. If it were already there, what a simple thing it would be to let nature take its course.

Since selfishness is born in the baby and is not one of those traits like will or contrariness that develop in the third or fourth year, it is wise to take it into account from the first and lead gently away from it whenever possible without causing anger or resentment. We cannot teach "fundamental" or real generosity, ever, by making it an eternally unpleasant thing in the child's mind.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

How can we go about teaching

the tiny child to be generous?

By getting him to feel happy about it.

This can be done by looking about for someone he likes, or even a pet. Thomas wants his new red ball. He won't let his sister touch it. He likes her well enough, but he isn't emotionally interested. He is emotionally interested in the new ten, however. Say to him, "Let kitty have your ball." Through extended interest in both the cat and the ball he will very likely pass it over. Satisfied, he will watch the play that ensues.

Sister could have cavorted much better, but as an agent to generosity she was a total loss. But the wedge has entered. Baby has learned the first step. Given up, away from himself, one thing to another thing he liked. The ball is still in the cage. Next his sister's doll can have it. Next Mary can have it. And then the little boy next door. Scrub the ball often as a reward for its usefulness.

WHEN GIVING APPEARS

Almost anything in the way of generosity may be best approached by these homely little lessons. As the child nears three a certain streak of giving enters his soul. It is sporadic and is motivated by several things, partly experimental.

Encourage this effort at this time. Accept anything the child offers with effusion and gratitude. Never refuse anything he wants to give. It is another weapon at your service. Later when reason is riding high and even sometimes at the early age, lessons in real sacrifice may be ventured. But success depends on the early associations of ideas and the pleasantness of giving.

The Sixth Earl of Mansfield Called Living Encyclopaedia

Born In August?

Carlisle, Pa.—If you are hoping for fame, consider the month of your birth.

Dr. E. C. Herber of Dickinson college told the Pennsylvania academy of science that August appears to have produced the largest number of famous persons; May, the least. The conclusions resulted from a study of 40,000 prominent persons.

A royal sturgeon, 9ft. long and 4ft. 6in. in girth, was landed at Aberdeen recently. The fish was sold for £16 10s.

Peter Baes, a Chancery clerk in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, wrote out the whole Bible and enclosed his manuscript in a walnut shell. The manuscript contained as many leaves as an ordinary Bible. Pliny tells us of a copy of the Iliad so small that the whole work could lie in a walnut shell.

For the first time in the history of the Norwegian fisheries the echosounding system has been used to locate fish. A vessel equipped with echosounders discovered a great school of fish at a depth of some 240 ft.

Raise Your Own Living

The Ontario Department of Agriculture says: Whether willing or not the majority of farmers are now obliged to supply more of their own needs. The following list may provide suggestions for further economy:

1. Milk a few good cows; feed recommended rations.
2. Fatten one pig for every two adult members of the family; cure the meat properly.
3. Keep at least 100 good hens, correctly housed and fed.
4. Raise a good garden, water from windmill if possible.
5. Plant only cash crops, which show little or no surplus.
6. Grow your own stock feed.
7. Butcher fat cows and steers; trade meat with neighbors.
8. Raise your own living; keep your roof tight.
9. Get down to earth and do the best you can today.
10. Drive a horse until you can afford to buy gasoline.